

## Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AF-10 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 OMB-01 T-03 ACDA-19 IO-12 EB-11 FAA-00 AID-20

COME-00 RSR-01 /179 W

----- 028094

P R 120901 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3456

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 1014

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ETRN, IS, SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIAN WARNING AGAINST AIRCRAFT

REF: A. STATE 44577; B. TEL AVIV 1838

SUMMARY: MFA PROMISES TO SEEK ANSWERS TO DEPT' S QUERIES  
RE SAUDI RED SEA NOTAMS. THEY BELIEVE IT MOST UNLIKELY,  
HOWEVER, THAT ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN. EMBASSY CONCURS. EMBASSY  
SUSPECTS NOTAMS MAY BE SAUDIS' WAY OF REACTING TO WHAT THEY  
MAINTAIN ARE CONTINUED ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS OF SAUDI  
TERRITORY NEAR AQABA. END SUMMARY.

1. DCM REVIEWED SAUDI NOTAMS ( REFTELS) WITH MFA' S  
DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AMBASSADOR NURI IBRAHIM  
MARCH 11. IBRAHIM WAS NOT AWARE OF ISSUE BUT PROMISED  
IMMEDIATELY TO FOLLOW UP WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS  
IN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND AVIATION.

2. HE CLEAR ON IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING ANY INCIDENT  
INVOLVING SAUDIS AND FOREIGN AIRCRAFT, AND COMMENTED THAT  
IT SEEMED MOST UNLIKELY TO HIM THAT ANYTHING COULD  
HAPPEN. PROMISED TO REPORT BACK REGARDING QUERIES IN  
DEPTEL, WHICH LEFT WITH HIM IN WRITTEN FORM.

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3. WITH REGARD TO FLIGHT INFO REGIONS ( FIR) COVERAGE OF REF SEA, EMBASSY NOTES THAT FOR AREA IN QUESTION, SAUDI FIR EXTENDS ROUGHLY TO MIDPOINT, WHERE IT IS CONTIGUOUS WITH EGYPTIAN FIR, COVERING WESTERN RED SEA.

4. FYI ONLY: WE BELIEVE THAT NOTAM UNDER REFERENCE REPRESENTS IN SOME MANNER CONTINUED SAUDI ENDEAVOR TO WARN AGAINST OVERFLIGHTS THEIR TERRITORY BY ISRAELI AIRCRAFT. LAST WEEK DEPUTY FONMIN MAS' UD AGAIN RAISED THIS SUBJECT, CLAIMING ( WITHOUT GIVING DATES) RECENTLY ISRAELIS PLANES HAD ONCE MORE VIOLATED SAUDI TERRITORY IN VICINITY OF MAGNA ON EAST BANK OF AQABA GULF; AIRCRAFT HAD TRAVELED FROM SOUTH TO NORTH AT HIGH ALTITUDE. MAS' UD ASSERTED THAT ISRAELI PLANES ENGAGED IN SHOOTING MISSILES OVER MOUNTAINS ALONG COASTAL AREA ON SAUDI SIDE OF GULF. ACCORDING TO MAS' UD, FURTHER ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS HAD TAKEN PLACE NEAR MOUTH OF GULF OF AQABA.

5. AMB TOLD MAS' UD THAT AS WE UNDERSTOOD SAUDI POSITION, SAG WAS NOT ASKING USG TAKE ANY ACTION. MAS' UD AGREED. HOWEVER, AMB WENT ON, WE HAD IN SEVERAL INSTANCES DRAWN GOI' S ATTENTION TO SAUDI AIR SPACE VIOLATIONS DESCRIBED TO US BY SAG. IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR US CONSIDER AGAIN POSSIBILITY OF SUCH STEP UNLESS SAG COULD GIVE US PRECISE INFORMATION. MAS' UD RECOGNIZED VALIDITY OF THIS POINT.

6. DEPTTEL IS CONCERNED, OF COURSE, PARTLY WITH MATTER OF PRINCIPLE WHICH WE WILL PURSUE WITH SAG. TO SOME EXTENT, HOWEVER, SAUDIS ARE FLEXING MUSCLES WHICH THEY DON' T HAVE. HAWK MISSILES AROUND JIDDA AND KHAMIS MUSHAYT WOULD REACH OUT HARDLY MORE THAN 30 MILES FROM SAUDI SEA COAST WITH LIMITED NORTH- SOUTH RADIUS. BEST INFORMATION WE HAVE ON SAUDI INTERCEPTORS REVEALS TEN LIGHTNINGS STATIONED AT KHAMIS MUSHAYT AND NOT HIGHLY OPERATIONAL. CHANCE OF THEIR PICKING UP AN ISRAELI AIRCRAFT AS LONG AS IT DID NOT COME WITHIN 20 MILES SAUDI COAST WOULD, UNDER BEST OF CONDITIONS, BE REMOTE. THERE ARE HAWK MISSILES NEAR TABUK, BUT BOTH GULF OF AQABA AND RED SEA ARE WELL BEYOND THEIR REACH. END FYI.  
THACHER

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\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**TAGS:** ETRN, PBOR, IS, SA  
**To:** NEA  
SECSTATE WASHDC  
TEL AVIV  
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